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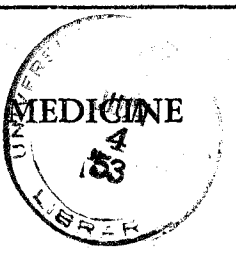

# BACKING INTO SOCIALIZED MEDICINE

*By* HOWARD BUFFETT

SOCIALIZED MEDICINE ought to be a dead issue in America. In a number of elections its advocates have taken repeated shellackings, to the point where candidates for office hardly dare mention it. This situation is testimony to the political effectiveness of the doctors who fought socialized medicine, as well as to the fact that Americans will reject any socialistic proposal that is properly labelled; that is why the word "socialism" is assiduously avoided by its avowed proponents, like the New Dealers or the Americans for Democratic Action.

Nevertheless, we are edging towards socialized medicine, whether we want it or not. We are being dragged into it as a result of our attempt, since Pearl Harbor, to meddle in the affairs of the world. We are backing into it by way of militarism.

Out of World War II emerged over fifteen million American veterans, each with a lifetime claim on the government for free medical care — subject to some conditions. Then there are about 3,700,000 men and women now in uniform who have a "plus" claim on society for medical attention; the "plus" is the inclusion of their dependents and families in the subsidy. To be exact, the "plus" is not entirely free, for the dependents are required to pay certain modest charges for such medical services as they receive.

Altogether, there are almost 20,000,000 Americans, mostly on the underside of fifty, who enjoy this special attention.

The government has sought to lessen this continuing strain on its budget by attaching some technical restrictions to the use of the privilege. The regulations call for dividing all medical cases into two broad classifications, service-connected and non-service-connected. An ailment that can be positively traced to service duties entitles the veteran to free and unlimited medical attention for the rest of his life. Non-service-connected disabilities are treated free in Veterans' Hospitals only if the patient signs an application in which he declares his inability to pay. His signature is final; it is not checked or questioned in any way. The idea is to protect the ailing veteran from embarrassment.

Naturally, most post-service health troubles are post-service developments; we all acquire more miseries as we get older. Also, like most of us, veterans have their financial

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troubles. It is not strange, therefore, that a recent survey came up with the statistics that 64 per cent of veteran hospital beds were occupied by patients suffering from non-service ailments. That left only a third of the available beds for service-connected cases, which explains why so many deserving veterans were kept on the waiting list. Quite a headache for the Veterans Administration.

THE FINANCIAL AND medical difficulties arising from the claims of veterans already on the rolls are as nothing to what looms ahead. Under the Selective Service law, about 900,000 young males are conscripted each year, and conscription automatically entitles them to medical care for the rest of their lives — according to regulations. Should Selective Service, often referred to as sugar-coated Universal Military Training, be converted into full-fledged UMT, in a comparatively few years at least half the nation's population — not counting dependents — would have a claim on Uncle Sam, M.D. Since UMT would be a continuing process, the claim on said doctor's services would grow and grow.

Nor does the problem stop there. As the government siphons off the medical personnel needed for sick veterans or soldiers in service, the talent available for the civilian population diminishes. The VA now employs 7,000 doctors regularly and an equal number on call. This creates an artificial shortage of doctors for the rest of the population, a shortage that is not relieved by the medical schools simply because more and more of their graduates are drawn into the services, either voluntarily or via the draft.

This false scarcity of doctors creates the very conditions which the advocates of socialized medicine decry. Following the law of supply and demand, the fees of the fewer available doctors rise. And as a matter of necessity, their offices are overcrowded and their examinations are often forced to be hasty and perfunctory. Thus the inflammatory charges of the socialists acquire substance — if one overlooks the cause of the condition, which is the absorption of a large part of our medical profession by the military.

Yet, the facts indicate that the hullabaloo about the shortage of doctors in America is just hullabaloo. In 1940, before the war, there was no shortage. In fact, there was a shortage of patients, for many young and well-trained doctors were finding it difficult to establish practices. What then happened to create the present apparent shortage?

In 1940 there were 175,382 medical doctors in the United States. By 1952 the number had increased to 211,680, a gain of 36,298. To be sure, the population of the country had increased by 15 per cent — but the doctor population had increased by 21 per cent.

Where are all these doctors? As stated above, a good portion of them are in the employ of the Vterans Administration. But, many more are in military uniforms, stationed wherever American troops are stationed. The Army has one doctor for every

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275 men and women in the service. The Navy personnel seem to be more fragile; they need a doctor for every 195 men in uniform. The Air Force, somewhat less demanding, gets along with a doctor for every 315. While those in combat areas could understandably be in need of such liberal medical service, most of the military forces are, thank God, not so occupied, and on the whole they constitute the healthiest segment of our entire population.

As for the rest of us, we must get along with one doctor to 710 possible patients. Whether that is adequate we do not know. But, we do know that many of our small communities cannot secure permanent doctors; and we do know that the available civilian doctors are carrying a heavy load. None of us, not even the overworked doctors, would complain about this condition, if it were created by the need of medical attention on the battlefield, or even in the service hospitals. There is a suspicion, however, that the large ratio of doctors to men in uniform is in line with the program of those who would collectivize America.

A GOVERNMENT THAT conscripts its youth is under obligation to provide them with adequate medical care, regardless of any shortage of doctors for the civilian population; no one can quarrel with that. And it is easy to see that the claim of veterans to medical help under varying circumstances also has justification. But, when we think of the likely impact of this situation on the future of private medical practice, the problem takes on an aspect quite unrelated to the duty of the country to its soldiers.

Not only will the soldier come out from the service with a firm conviction that he is entitled to all he can get from the government, but the doctors who have had a taste of regimented medicine, with its freedom from responsibility to the patient, will most likely favor a continuance of the sinecure in civilian life. Not having had any experience with private practice, he will not understand its superiority and will not therefore be inclined to fight against socialized medicine. The struggle against socialization has been waged by American doctors who had built up practices in the hard, competitive way. Their minds had not been socialized. But, the breed of doctors in the offing will have had a different training.

The doctor who enters the army directly from medical school, or after his internship, knows nothing but bureaucratic medicine, and has no experience by which to measure its disadvantages. Just as the young graduate who goes to Washington immediately after he receives his diploma soon makes a perfect mental adjustment to statism, so the doctor in uniform learns how to get along by pleasing his superiors (not his patients), and how much easier it is to make reports than diagnoses. Besides, the regularity of the

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pay, though inadequate, is an immediate inducement that offsets the promise of the future in private practice. Why hang up a shingle and wait for patients? The government has lots of them. And why fret about fees and collections? The monthly check from the government is always good.

So then, socialized medicine can slide into the American way of life without any new legislation. This would be all right to those who are hell-bent for socialism. To those of us who have always known that militarism and socialism are related, the situation is dark; unless we can get rid of militarism we cannot prevent the coming of socialism.

Perhaps the solution of this problem lies with the doctors who know of the dangers to medicine, both as a science and an art, in socialization. They have thus far put up a good fight, and maybe they can figure out a maneuver to prevent the destruction of the profession by the flank movement from militarism. Perhaps the young doctors can be taught that regimented medicine is bad for them and the country.

TO THOSE WHO refuse to see the danger in the present trend, and who view the situation as a temporary post-war phenomenon, I offer a bit of history. The Civil War ended in 1865. But the largest number of pension recipients was not reached until 1915, 50 years later, when 691,606 Civil War pensions were being paid. The peak of expenditures for Civil War pensions was reached in 1921. From this experience it is fair to conclude that the medical demands arising from our two World Wars will grow with the years, and will continue to provide the advocates of socialized medicine with plausible argument.

The veterans are not to blame for this situation. They bear little or no responsibility for it. When they were drawn into the bloody and futile overseas ventures, they were entirely too young and inexperienced to pass judgment on the policies that disrupted their lives, or to understand what the consequences of these ventures would be. One can express disappointment, however, that their leadership has not supported the small band of patriots in and out of Congress who have resisted the drainage of our economy to the point where future payments to widows, orphans and wounded will be of questionable value. The continuing wastage of our wealth since World War II, by way of handouts, while working into the hands of our socialist-minded, must in the end weaken the nation's ability to discharge its solemn duty to the veterans.

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Howard Buffett last year retired from Congress, where he served four terms as Representative from the 2nd Nebraska District.

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# HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

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**While Dulles Travels:** As rumors of appeasement of Soviet Russia continue to circulate, we learn from a high source that the top policy-making body of the Government last week asked former Ambassador George Kennan to write a policy recommendation about Russia.

The policy-making body is the National Security Council which decides on overall diplomatic and military strategy. Kennan, former Ambassador to Russia, is known as the author of the "containment" policy which shaped the Truman-Acheson moves abroad since 1946. It was this policy which Secretary Dulles made motions to abolish when he took office last January and urged an active anti-Soviet policy rather than the passive "containment" course of Kennan. The release of the 7th Fleet at Formosa was considered a positive indication of the new Dulles "aggressive" policy at the time. The clash between the views of Dulles and Kennan made news at that time, and it has been assumed ever since that the two were very much at odds.

Kennan has been retired from the State Department for some time, writing and lecturing. Last week, he made an address at Notre Dame, deprecating the danger of Communism and fifth-columnists in the U.S. and generally opposing what is called McCarthyism. In his private activities, Kennan has been reportedly lighting fires here and there in the land under the Dulles position.

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That the author of "containment" should be called back and given such an important assignment will be interpreted along diplomatic row as a sign of appeasement of Russia by the Eisenhower Administration.

We have been unable to ascertain who prompted the National Security Council to give this assignment to Kennan, but there are rumors which attribute the move to Undersecretary Walter Bedell Smith, now acting as Secretary of State in the absence of Dulles abroad. Smith is regarded as hand-in-glove with the old Acheson clique which still rules the State Department.

**Arms and the Meat Ax:** Senator Taft shows signs of breaking with the White House on the size of foreign aid funds, and on the utility of the UN in Korea. But there is another issue on which the Senator is importuned by many to deviate from the Administration line: the Defense budget with its severe cuts on Air Force appropriations.

Certainly, Taft was the one outstanding political leader, apart from Hoover, who made popular the thesis of Air Supremacy as the cornerstone of national defense, plugging away at it for many months, culminating in his famous Lansing, Mich., speech of a year ago. How is he going to make a contrary decision popular among his many adherents in the country?

For the proposed cut of Air Force funds is so drastic that it rules out the air strategy of which Taft was the principal prophet, and at the same time makes Taft a supporter of the mass ground army of which he was long an opponent.

There is an even more distasteful vista ahead for the Majority Leader. Universal Military Training will undoubtedly be urged again to provide the masses of men needed for a large ground combat army. Taft's opposition in the past to UMT has been well known, and his following on this issue has been large, particularly in the Middle West and farming areas.

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The Ohio Senator must also be disturbed about another development. The Wilson budget, with its reduction in planes, has presented to the Democratic opposition a chance to lead the national fight for air supremacy. Many Democrats have already rallied to this side, for obviously partisan reasons. Other Democrats simply want spending, in accordance with their socialistic policy; and any cut, no matter which service it affects, is repugnant to them.

But, Senator Stuart Symington, Democrat from Missouri, is a horse of a different color. He is a highly intelligent and respected political leader, and as a former Secretary of Air can convincingly put the case for air supremacy to the people, without any partisan considerations.

Nor is he alone. Already one GOP Senator, the popular Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, has attacked the Wilson budget with many penetrating questions. Also, it is rumored that at least one great national magazine publisher, a Republican, is preparing to take up the cudgels for the Air Force, in a protracted campaign. His strategy will be to attack and seek to oust Defense Secretary Wilson, much as opponents forced the resignation of Defense Secretary Louis Johnson in 1950, on the ground of laxity in providing sufficient defense funds.

These are the prospects looming before a Majority Leader who — many of his old friends find — has compromised altogether too many of his former courageous stands.

**Education Front:** Senator Jenner has come out with a description of a "cooperative plan" for keeping Communists out of the schools and holds it up as a possible model for other states and regions.

"In California", said Jenner, "the more than 20 colleges — both public and private — have joined to eliminate any present Communist teachers from their faculties and to prevent the infiltration of any new ones." The Senator went on to tell how these colleges, working closely with the state of California legislative committee on Un-American affairs, removed at least 100 Communist teachers since June 24, 1952, when the program went into effect. At least as many, said Jenner, have been kept off faculties.

The Senator underscored the difficulty which colleges encounter if they seek to do this job by themselves. He quoted Dr. William Jansen, Superintendent of the New York schools, who expressed his doubts that faculties and local school authorities could take the initiative in combating Communist infiltration. A faculty, he suggested, might find itself too divided to do the job effectively.

The Indiana Senator, Chairman of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, drew attention to one aspect of the work not usually mentioned. "I was gratified to note", he said, "that the California committee and our committees have had one other experience in common — one of which we are very proud. Our inquiries have cleared some persons who had been branded with a pro-Communist label because of the uninformed thinking of some over-zealous individuals. This is the brighter side of the picture which the public does not see."

**The "Witch-Hunt" Front:** The biggest laugh of the week was provoked by the garbled syntax of the keynote of Senator Herbert Lehman's "keynoting" speech at the annual pow-wow of that noisome outfit of socialistic mugwumps and New Deal Communist-coddlers, Americans for Democratic Action. The newspapers unwittingly highlighted the boner by leading off with it thus:

"Washington, May 23 — 'The time has come when the Eisenhower Administration must make its choice between appeasing the irresponsibles at home and breaking up the unity of free men abroad', Sen. Lehman told the convention of the Americans for Democratic Action today."

Either Lehman's subconscious betrayed him, according to one amateur psychoanalyst, or else his speechwriter did him dirt, knowing that Lehman's knowledge of the English language is strictly of the Progressive Education, or illiterate, variety. "Maybe Herbert H. Lehman's middle name is Hobson", commented another. "He gives Ike the choice of stringing along with McCarthy or offending Attlee and says Ike

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can't offend Attlee and appease McCarthy at the same time. Lehman probably uses the double negative under the impression it is stronger."

**Lehman's Vigilantes:** The New Deal relicts of O.W.I. (Office of War Information), who have long been feather-bedded in radio as "commentators" (TV, incidentally, is much freer of the pests, though not wholly free), seized upon Lehman's call for "a thousand Paul Reveres" to "arouse the country" against the "danger of McCarthyism", as a call for Vigilantes to organize in hooded secrecy, if necessary, to terrorize and terrify the "reactionaries".

By the only definition derivable from the rest of Lehman's speech, a "reactionary" is anyone who is in favor of Congressional investigations designed to root Communists out of government and expose the Communist conspirators who have dangerously affected public policy, public opinion and public education. In the Lehman lexicon, a "reactionary" is also one who looks with anger and disgust upon alleged "allies" who take millions in blood-money from the Soviet Union and Communist China in return for supplies vital to the Communist slaughter of American men and youth in Korea.

The little quislings of Communism in radio really whooped it up for Lehman's call for vigilantes. We look for a revival of the hooded nightshirt business, bearing the "anti-McCarthyism" label. It's the old story: scratch a guy who is always pounding his chest and calling himself a "liberal" and you find a Kleagle in the larval state.

**Federal Aid to Education:** A battle royal has just been staged in Indiana on the issue of federal aid to education. Two groups within the Indiana Parent-Teachers Association have come to grips on this vital issue. The outcome, however, has been somewhat blurred by complexities and the story needs telling from the beginning.

It started several years ago, when a tiny, official group at the top of the Indiana PTA put the state organization on record in favor of federal aid to education, although no vote of the membership had ever been made. This action aroused elements in the membership and an opposition group took shape which forced the "official group" to submit the issue to a referendum.

Hence, during the past spring, the official leadership sent out a "ballot" to the 1123 local PTA units in the state. The Indianapolis *Times* reports that the ballots contained 48 different questions which were "vague, confused and virtually incomprehensible. It required long study, and careful reference to statements of 'national policy' issued months before even to learn whether a 'yes' vote favored or opposed federal aid. At no place on the 'ballot' was there a direct question like 'Are you in favor of federal aid to education?', or any opportunity to vote on the issue as such. Some units discussed this 'ballot' at meetings and did vote on it. Two-thirds of them apparently gave up even trying to understand it and cast no vote at all."

The upshot last week was this: the "tiny, official" group at top announced that only 345 of the 1123 Indiana PTA units had cast "valid" votes but that federal aid had won by a small margin.

The group opposed to federal aid to education has called "foul", and contends that a survey they conducted showed that actually PTA units in Indiana were against it by a ratio of 5 to 1. Also, since some 95 unit votes were thrown out by the official group, opponents say that if these ballots had been counted the vote would have gone against federal aid. One of the leaders of the opposition said (Indianapolis *Star*, May 7), "the dishonest tactics used to deceive the delegates have proven the need for a complete overhauling of PTA procedure to give the members control of the organization that speaks for them".

The Indianapolis *Times* sums it up: "Whatever weight the endorsement of federal aid to local schools by Indiana's Parent-Teacher Association ever may have carried has been pretty thoroughly exploded by the state convention. . . . So far as Indiana is concerned, this pressure group has simply lost its pressure."

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**That Fifth Amendment:** A member of a military court-martial reports the following: A soldier was brought up on the charge of adultery. The chief witness in the case was his collaborator. When she was questioned she refused to answer on the ground that her answer might tend to incriminate her.

**Sidelight on the British:** We have received, from a British subscriber, a batch of clippings from the British press, dealing with Senator McCarthy. All are severely critical. Most are quite inaccurate and badly misinformed about the Senator's career, habits, friends and utterances. For that we can not entirely blame the British press in view of the colossal smear campaign directed against the Senator by a large part of the U.S. press. Nevertheless, the British, usually given to understatement, seemed to have been rather desirous of "buying" the current anti-McCarthy "line" and of describing as "witch-burning" any attempts in the U.S. to oust and expose crypto-Communists in the Government.

HUMAN EVENTS is not the only one in the U.S. to take note of this British prejudice. Willis Ballinger, Washington radio commentator, in a broadcast on April 29, noted the rough treatment accorded McCarthy's investigators, Cohn and Schine, when the latter visited England recently, particularly by the usually staid *Manchester Guardian.* Ballinger says: "The *Guardian* is, of course, an important paper in England. And the piece we have referred to only serves to convince us that England for many moons now has been acting very strangely about Communists. The nephew of Anthony Eden, British Foreign Affairs Minister, says publicly that it is estimated that there are some ten thousand members of the Communist party, Kremlin stooges, in the Civil Service of England. That was months ago. But we haven't heard of anything being done about this charge, not even a follow-up investigation.

"We know from Lord Vansittart that the Communists heavily infiltrated the British Labor Party when it was in office, that Russia's friends and agents were placed in key governmental spots. We know that when Klaus Fuchs was finally caught up with as one who had handed over to Russia our atom bomb secrets, that the British gave him a few years in jail and that he is now loose. There seems to be a frightening lethargy in England about Communist infiltraters, all of which confirms a suspicion that we have long had, namely that the Kremlin has had England eating out of its hand for a long time."

**Note on Pearl Harbor:** A retired Dutch admiral has just offered highly interesting evidence about the Pearl Harbor mystery, suggesting that the U.S. Government at that time had more than a suspicion that the Japanese would attack us. Admiral C.E.L. Helfrich, former commander of the Netherlands naval forces in the South Pacific, told his story to the Washington *Evening Star* on May 13. Helfrich expressed pride that he had got his warships on battle stations a week before the "surprise" attack on Pearl Harbor. "Curiously enough", reports the *Star*, "he got his tip from the U.S. Navy."

The Dutch officer tells an interesting tale. During 1941, he had gradually come to the conclusion that the Japanese might stage a surprise attack, for various reasons. For one thing, he remembered history — how the Japanese had launched a surprise attack on the Imperial Russian Fleet at Port Arthur in 1905. Also, his own intelligence service had reported a gradual Japanese naval buildup off the east coast of Indo-China and in the Bay of Siam during 1941. But, finally, he received a communication from Admiral Thomas C. Hart who at that time commanded the American naval units in the Philippines, asking permission to refuel at Dutch bases on the east coast of Borneo. This word from Hart came to Helfrich just eight days before Pearl Harbor.

"He guessed from this", the *Star* relates, "that the United States had information that a Japanese attack was imminent and that Admiral Hart was taking his surface vessels out of the Philippines in preparation for it." Hence, he sent his own ships to battle stations.

The Helfrich account thus offers important new testimony that the "surprise" Japanese attack was not such a great surprise at all to the U.S. Government.

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